Harry the 8. nam'd in merriment his Vicar of hell. By which compendious way all the contagion that foreine books can infuſe, will finde a paſſage to the people farre eaſier and ſhorter then an Indian voyage, though it could be ſail'd either by the North of *Cataio* Eaſtward, or of *Canada* Weſtward, while our Spaniſh licencing gags the Engliſh Preſſe never ſo ſeverely. But on the other ſide that infection which is from books of controverſie in Religion, is more doubtfull and dangerous to the learned, then to the ignorant; and yet thoſe books muſt be permitted untoucht by the licencer. It will be hard to inſtance where any ignorant man hath bin ever ſeduc't by Papiſticall book in Engliſh, unleſſe it were commended and expounded to him by ſome of that Clergy: and indeed all ſuch tractats whether falſe or true are as the Propheſie of *Iſaiah* was to the *Eunuch*, not to be *underſtood without a guide*. But of our Prieſts and Doctors how many have bin corrupted by ſtudying the comments of Jeſuits and *Sorboniſts*, and how faſt they could transfuſe that corruption into the people, our experience is both late and ſad. It is not forgot, ſince the acute and diſtinct *Arminius* was perverted meerly by the peruſing of a nameleſſe diſcours writt'n at *Delf*, which at firſt he took in hand to confute. Seeing therefore that thoſe books, & thoſe in great abundance which are likelieſt to taint both life and doctrine, cannot be ſuppreſt without the fall of learning, and of all ability in diſputation, and that theſe books of either ſort are moſt and ſooneſt catching to the learned, from whom to the common people what ever is hereticall or diſſolute may quickly be convey'd, and that evill manners are as perfectly learnt without books a thouſand other ways which cannot be ſtopt, and evill doctrine not with books can propagate, except a teacher guide, which he might alſo doe without writing, and ſo beyond prohibiting, I am not able to unfold, how this cautelous enterpriſe of licencing can be exempted from the number of vain and impoſſible attempts. And he who were pleaſantly diſpos'd, could not well avoid to lik'n it to the exploit of that gallant man who thought to pound up the crows by ſhutting his Parkgate. Beſides another inconvenience, if learned men be the firſt receivers out of books & diſpredders both of vice and error, how ſhall the licencers themſelves be confided in, unleſſe we can conferr upon them, or they aſſume to themſelves above all others in the Land, the grace of infallibility, and uncorruptedneſſe? And again if it be true, that a wiſe man like a good refiner can gather gold out of the droſſieſt volume, and that a fool will be a fool with the

beſt book, yea or without book, there is no reaſon that we ſhould deprive a wiſe man of any advantage to his wiſdome, while we ſeek to reſtrain from a fool, that which being reſtrain'd will be no hindrance to his folly. For if there ſhould be ſo much exactneſſe always us'd to keep that from him which is unfit for his reading, we ſhould in the judgement of *Ariſtotle* not only, but of *Salomon*, and of our Saviour, not voutſafe him good precepts, and by conſequence not willingly admit him to good books; as being certain that a wiſe man will make better uſe of an idle pamphlet, then a fool will do of ſacred Scripture. 'Tis next alleg'd we muſt not expoſe our ſelves to temptations without neceſſity, and next to that, not imploy our time in vain things. To both theſe objections one anſwer will ſerve, out of the grounds already laid, that to all men ſuch books are not temptations, nor vanities; but uſefull drugs and materialls wherewith to temper and compoſe effective and ſtrong med'cins, which mans life cannot want. Thereſt, as children and childiſh men, who have not the art to qualifie and prepare theſe working mineralls, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hinder'd forcibly they cannot be by all the licencing that Sainted Inquiſition could ever yet contrive; which is what I promis'd to deliver next, That this order of licencing conduces nothing to the end for which it was fram'd; and hath almoſt prevented me by being clear already while thus much hath bin explaining. See the ingenuity of Truth, who when ſhe gets a free and willing hand, opens her ſelf faſter, then the pace of method and diſcours can overtake her. It was the task which I began with, To ſhew that no Nation, or well inſtituted State, if they valu'd books at all, did ever uſe this way of licencing; and it might be anſwer'd, that this is a piece of prudence lately diſcover'd. To which I return, that as it was a thing ſlight and obvious to think on, ſo if it had bin difficult to finde out, there wanted not among them long ſince, who ſuggeſted ſuch a cours; which they not following, leave us a pattern of their judgement, that it was not the not knowing, but the not approving, which was the cauſe of their not uſing it. *Plato*, a man of high autority indeed, but leaſt of all for his Commonwealth, in the book of his laws, which no City ever yet receiv'd, fed his fancie with making many edicts to his ayrie Burgomaſters, which they who otherwiſe admire him, wiſh had bin rather buried and excus'd in the *genial* cups of an *Academick* night-ſitting. By which laws he ſeems to tolerat no kind of learning, but by unalterable decree, conſisting

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